

OAKLEIGH SCHOOL

Oakleigh Road North

Whetstone

London N20 0DH

Tel: 020 8368 5336

Fax: 020 8361 6922

Email: office@oakleigh.barnetmail.net

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Ruth Harding



Equal Opportunities Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

Oakleigh School and the community in which we are situated are diverse, multilingual and cohesive. As a diverse school, we value and celebrate the richness of culture, backgrounds and traditions we share. The richness that our diversity brings helps to make Oakleigh an excellent place to learn and work. Our school is responsive to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of its users and the community.

This policy sets out our values, our approach to equalities and understanding of how we are placing it at the heart of everything we do.

Aims

Oakleigh School is committed to improving the quality of experience and wider participation in the economic, educational, cultural, social and community life of our pupils and their families. We also aim to have a staff that reflects the diversity of talent, experiences and skills of the community.

Legal duties

1. We welcome our duties under the Race Relations 1976 as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005; and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 as amended by the Equality Act 2006.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these four sets of duties are essential for achieving the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework, and that they reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations referred to above, we are guided by seven principles. We are committed to ensuring maximum participation for all users of the school by ensuring that consideration is given to, and adaptations made to ensure that no one is discriminated against because of their gender, disability, ethnicity or socio-economic background.

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

- We are aware of and responsive to the differing needs of our children and users and seek to ensure equality of opportunities and quality of experience for all.
- We are committed to providing opportunities for pupil voice to be heard and offer a range of communication strategies to enable children to communicate e.g. makaton, on body signing, PECS, switches, intensive interaction, eye pointing. We are responsive to children's communication in less formal ways, such as stilling, posture, facial expression and gazing.
- We value the ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status of our children, parents/carers, staff and members of the community.
- We believe that children learn best when they feel secure and valued. Our school ensures that all pupils' languages, religious and cultural experiences are valued as part of the curriculum and that there is a process to support the induction and integration of new arrivals and other mid-phase entrants.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantage which people may face.

- We work collaboratively with parents and other agencies to ensure that the social, moral, spiritual and cultural needs of their children are known to staff and upheld in school
- Our curriculum reflects the diversity within our school and community and provides opportunities for this diversity to be celebrated. We appreciate the richness that diversity brings to children's learning and use this to enhance children's learning experiences.
- We value and respect the diversity within our local, national and global communities and use the richness that this diversity brings to enhance children's learning opportunities.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- our school's place in the community, with children with disabilities and learning difficulties being seen in a positive light and as valued members of the community.
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and a culture in which difference is valued and celebrated.
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men, and an absence of sexual harassment

Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- We are committed to incorporating equalities considerations into our employment policies and practices.
- Promoting equality of opportunity to our staff is a fundamental commitment.
- As we develop the future of our school we will seek to offer training and employment opportunities that fully cultivate our staff's skills and talent to serve the children and school community.
- We want to create a school of high productivity and skill, where people can flourish and maintain a healthy work-life balance reflecting the full talent and diversity of our communities.
- We want our staff to achieve their potential and understand their role in helping the school meet its statutory equality duties. We expect all staff to understand the school's equalities values and apply them to their job roles.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist:

- We see all inequalities and barriers to equality of opportunity as unacceptable, are proactive in finding solutions and are committed to overcoming these obstacles.
- We celebrate differences between people in our school, local, national and international communities. We consider diversity to increase the richness of children's learning environments and the working environments of staff.
- We provide opportunities for men, women, girls and boys, with or without disabilities from a range of religions, cultures, ethnicities, economic and social backgrounds to interact and work together in positive and meaningful ways.
- We provide outreach to other schools and organisations to help them to reduce and remove barriers to learning and opportunity for children with learning difficulties and disabilities..

Principle 6: We consult widely

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We involve and consider:

- children
- parents/carers
- staff
- governors
- users of the school
- our partners

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life:

- We are committed to providing positive learning experiences for children with and without disabilities through our inclusion links with local schools
- We are committed to working collaboratively with other agencies and departments to ensure that our commitment to the Every Child Matters framework is upheld, and that children and families have the best quality of experience possible.
- Our curriculum provides learning opportunities which highlight issues and events in the local, national and international community and give children the opportunity to be active citizens.

Action plans

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy are what make a difference.

We provide opportunities for all users of the school to provide feedback about equality of opportunity and create action plans to address the needs of our users. We are responsive to the changing needs of our users.

The curriculum

We review, monitor and adapt our curriculum in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the seven principles outlined above. Through our curriculum we seek to provide opportunities for children to experience and celebrate the diversity of our local, national and global community.

We provide a range of resources which reflect the diversity of our children and the community.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure that the principles listed above apply also to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- children's progress, attainment and assessment
- children's personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour support
- working in partnership with parents and carers
- working with the wider community

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties including:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs

- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

Prejudice-related incidents are identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they were dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

The School Improvement Committee has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy as the teacher responsible is both the teacher and governor responsible for community cohesion and equalities currently. This teacher is currently on Maternity Leave, and the responsibility is being held by one of the Assistant Heads.

The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

A member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy. All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- support pupils, families and staff who have English is an additional language and remove barriers to effective communication.
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and parents.

Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils, parents and other users of the school and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

We are proactive in upholding the religious needs of our children, ensuring that the dietary requirements of their religion are honoured at school. Where possible we aim to ensure that children's religious practices are incorporated into school life.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receives appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the head teacher and governing body.

*The following provides information on how we have due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations**. This includes steps we are taking to tackle and meet the needs of particular individuals and groups of pupils with protected characteristics.*

Disability

How we advance equality of opportunity:

- We support children and their families by meeting their individual needs.
- We work in close collaboration with families and agencies that serve them – for example community nursing teams, community occupational therapy, housing, social care.
- We take steps to ensure that pupils have access to experiences and opportunities similar to those of their mainstream peers.
- We involve children, their families and staff in the changes and improvements we make and consult them on issues affecting them.
- We are fully accessible we keep this under review to ensure that we are informed of new innovations that our pupils can access.
- We plan, implement and evaluate inclusive projects with local mainstream schools so that children have the opportunity to learn from and with each other.
- We provide outreach and support to local mainstream schools to help them support their children who have special educational needs.
- Our family support workers provide in home support for parents/carers/siblings, as well as parent/carers groups and holiday opportunities.
- We promote our inclusive attitudes and ethos by opening our school to visitors such as trainee teachers, parties visiting from abroad, community faith leaders etc.
- We work closely with borough transport to ensure that children travel to school safely and happily.
- We are visible in our local community and have strong community links with the local café and shops, the allotments and local schools.
- We support our children during hospital visits and provide outreach and support to hospital staff as appropriate.
- Where appropriate, we provide adjustments or support to members of staff and volunteers who have special educational needs or a disability. This could be through internal discussion or via the LA Occupational Health.
- Where appropriate, we provide adjustments or support to parents/carers who have a special educational needs or disability. This could be through support from organisations such as Barnet Mencap.

How we foster good relations and promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development:

- We open the school to the wider community through events such as the Summer Fair and other fundraising events, promoting a positive view of disability within our community.
- We provide Religious Education for pupils and invite families and members of the community to participate in these sessions.
- We model inclusive practices by providing inclusive learning opportunities to which we invite children from local schools.
- Where appropriate children participate in inclusive activities with children who share their faith.
- We have links with local places of worship and children participate in visits to these places, as well as welcoming special people to our school.
- Our respect and value of difference and diversity is reflected in our curriculum, which provides children with a broad experience of the world.
- We take part in events such as Sign to Sing, World Book Day and inclusive sporting events.
- We ensure that the curriculum has positive images of people who have disabilities.
- We talk to children in local schools about our pupils with disabilities and how they learn. We provide opportunities for these children to visit and learn more about our school.
- We also have strong links in the wider community, for example links with the British Museum, Tottenham Hotspur coaching, the Hollies School in Wales and Choongo Basic School in Zambia.

Ethnicity and race (including EAL learners)

How we advance equality of opportunity:

- We support children and their families by meeting their individual needs.
- We work closely with parents/carers and families to improve outcomes for particular groups.
- Our family support workers work in close collaboration with families, encouraging participation in school life.
- We link with groups, organisations and projects in the local community.
- We celebrate the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of children and families and encourage families to share this with us.
- We plan and deliver exciting learning opportunities which reflect and celebrate the diversity of our school.
- Our assemblies reflect the diversity of our school and provide the opportunity to celebrate festivals that are special to children in the school.
- We have a diverse staff group who speak a range of languages. We encourage staff to talk to children and families in their home languages when possible.
- We celebrate the diversity of our community through activities such as 'Community Languages Week' and 'Black History Month'.

How we foster good relations and promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development:

- The school's diversity is part of the fabric of the school, enhancing learning opportunities and enriching the curriculum.
- We provide children with opportunities to learn about the experiences and achievements of different communities and cultures.
- We aim to educate staff so that they are confident in working with families from a range of diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- The curriculum is supported by resources that provide positive images that reflect the diverse communities of the local, national and international communities.
- We promote positive relationships between families in school through events such as Parent Workshops, Sibling Groups and Family Therapy.
- We organise special events and celebrations such as Black History Month and Community Languages week, and invite children from local schools to visit to maximise the impact of these activities.
- We have a strong partnership with Choongo Basic School in Zambia and celebrate the richness that this partnership brings to our learning.
- We take part in award and accreditation schemes such as the International School Award and Investors in People.

Gender

How we advance equality of opportunity:

- We support children and their families by meeting their individual needs.
- We identify and address barriers to participation of boys and girls and activities.
- We ensure that gender stereotypes are avoided.
- We encourage male and female parents, carers and siblings to be involved in school life and contribute to their children's learning and progress.
- We provide opportunities for children to learn from male and female role models.
- Children have opportunities to interact with girls and boys of their own age group, and older children through inclusive activities with local primary and secondary schools.

How we foster good relations and promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development:

- We ensure that children experience positive, non stereotypical images of women and men, girls and boys across the curriculum.
- We encourage male and female parents, carers and siblings to take part in events such as Community Languages Week, History Day, Black History month etc.
- We provide opportunities for children to take part in a broad range of leisure activities, as appropriate to their likes, age and development rather than their gender.

- We encourage participation of male parents/carers through events such as Father's Story Week and parent workshops.

Religion and belief

How we advance equality of opportunity:

- The school's religious/spiritual diversity is part of the fabric of the school, enhancing learning opportunities and enriching the curriculum.
- We work alongside local places of worship so that children can experience being in these places, and learning from people in these places.
- We encourage children to develop their sense of being special, being part of something special, identity and self worth.
- We have links with local faith schools and some children attend faith schools as part of their inclusion programmes.
- The religious needs of children and families are upheld and respected in school – for example, children's dietary needs in relation to religion are met, where possible children use alternate and augmentative communication to say prayers at appropriate times of day and children are taught to tolerate articles of clothing that are important to wear.

How we foster good relations and promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development:

- We provide Religious Education, in which we celebrate the different religions of children in the school, as well as those that have no religion.
- We have good relationships with families and use their knowledge of their own religions to ensure that their children's religious needs are met.
- Children take part in collective worship, assemblies and visits to local places of worship. Assembly topics reflect the diversity of the school.
- We communicate respectfully, challenging misconceptions and being mindful of 'over generalisation' about religious needs.
- Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development is a part of the curriculum and is communicated to parents in the Programme of Study.
- We have been recognised by the Accord Coalition for Inclusive Education for the outstanding way in which we embed an ethos of inclusion and mutual respect.

Monitoring and evaluation

We are aware of our pupil's learning needs, disabilities, ethnicity and background and support them and their families to enable maximum achievement and participation.

We have two Equalities Objectives per school year, which can be seen on our website. These are evaluated at the end of each school year.

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

We welcome feedback about the impact of our policies and practices on the school, local and global communities and are responsive to feedback.